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FOREWORD

In Norman days, when a man was found slain within the borders of a "hundred," the folk of that community were liable to a fine unless they proved his "Englishry." And by a statute of 1285, the hundred in which a robbery was committed was obliged to produce the robber on pain of like penalty. These impositions were not without justification. Until very recent days, except in periods of civil disorder, crime was almost exclusively a local phenomenon. The hundred bred the criminals who preyed upon it. But the Kansas town into which sweeps a squadron of high-powered cars, to depart amid a crackling of machine gun fire after a bank has been expeditiously rifled, can count no native sons among the bandits. Nor can "hue and cry" rouse the townsfolk to effective pursuit. Local police are equally impotent to act.

Normally society will react slowly to a change in conditions which impairs the efficacy of its laws. But so dramatic have been the recent depredations of organized criminal bands, enabled by modern methods of transportation to operate over wide territories, that action has been relatively prompt in forthcoming. The aid of the federal government has first been besought—in part because with respect to certain offenses it alone is competent to act, in part because to appeal to Washington affords an outlet for the urge for action without requiring a painstaking—and politically painful—reorganization of state and local law enforcing agencies.

This issue of *Law and Contemporary Problems* deals with some of the more important statutes enacted in the recent session of Congress in response to the demand for federal action and then turns to the consideration of broader measures which are being advocated as means whereby governmental authority, state and local as well as national, may be better implemented to cope with the criminal of today. A final article, collating the statistics of federal crimes, depicts the extent of the criminal law enforcement activities in which the federal government has been engaging.

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